

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 4-16 are withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner as being directed to a non-elected invention.

Claim 1 is amended to recite “an acrylic ~~or rubber based~~ pressure-sensitive adhesive composition of the aqueous dispersion type containing an acrylic polymer having a glass transition point of -20°C or lower and a weight-average molecular weight of at least 200,000, whereby the polyalkylene glycol is incorporated into the composition in the form of an aqueous solution after the polymerization of the acrylic polymer.” Support can be found, for example, at page 13, lines 9-17 and page 16, lines 15-19 of the specification as originally filed. No new matter is added.

Entry of the Amendment along with reconsideration and review of the claims on the merits are respectfully requested.

Formal Matters

Applicants appreciate the Examiner’s acknowledgement of Applicants’ claim for foreign priority and receipt of the certified copies of the priority documents.

Applicants also appreciate the Examiner’s consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 11, 2003, and July 22, 2004.

Response to Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Iijima et al. (USPN 4,226,915) or Rosenski et al. (USPN 5,319,020).

The Examiner cites each of Iijima et al. (col. 3, lines 25-65 and Table 1) and Rosenski et al. (col. 3, lines 31-67) as individually teaching pressure-sensitive adhesive compositions comprising aqueous dispersions of acrylic polymers or rubbers with polyalkylene glycols having average molecular weights higher than 5,000, in amounts above 1 part by weight per 100 parts by weight of the pressure-sensitive adhesive composition solids.

Applicants respond as follows.

Claim 1 is amended to recite "an acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive composition of the aqueous dispersion type containing an acrylic polymer having a glass transition point of -20°C or lower and a weight-average molecular weight of at least 200,000, whereby the polyalkylene glycol is incorporated into the composition in the form of an aqueous solution after the polymerization of the acrylic polymer." Neither Iijima nor Rosenski disclose the invention of Claim 1 as amended.

The present invention differs from Iijima's invention in that, in the present invention, a specific polyalkylene glycol alone can be incorporated into a specific acrylic water dispersion type pressure-sensitive adhesive.

Iijima describes that "when a water-soluble or water-swellaable polymer alone is incorporated in an adhesive, a small moisture permeability can be imparted to the adhesive layer, but even if such a polymer is incorporated in a large quantity, an adhesive layer having a good moisture permeability cannot be obtained" (see column 2, lines 55 to 61), implying that Iijima's "polyethylene oxide with a molecular weight of 300,000 or more" or the like, which corresponds to Iijima's water-soluble or water-swellaable polymer, is never used alone.

More specifically, Iijima discloses that the water-soluble polyol disclosed therein

contains polyethylene glycol with a molecular weight of 1,000 or less and polypropylene glycol with a molecular weight of 1,000 or less (see column 3, lines 42 to 51). In addition, Iijima discloses that the water-soluble or water-swellaible polymer contains polyethylene oxide with a molecular weight of 300,000 or more (see column 3, lines 57 to 63). Surely, Iijima's water-soluble polyol is outside the molecular weight range of the present invention, i.e., from 20,000 to 5,000,000.

Regarding the difference between Iijima's polyalkylene oxide and Applicants' claimed polyalkylene glycol, Applicants comment as follows. Generally, polyalkylene oxide (polymerization of ethylene oxide) is designated as having a molecular weight larger than that of polyalkylene glycol (polymerization of ethylene glycol). Thus, Iijima's polyethylene oxide having a molecular weight exceeding 300,000 with no specified upper limit as set forth at column 3, lines 62-63 is not necessarily the same as the claimed polyalkylene glycol having a molecular weight of from 20,000 to 5,000,000.

Further, although Iijima discloses that the polyethylene oxide has a molecular weight of 300,000 or more, no basis for this molecular weight range is set forth, and such polyethylene oxide is not used in the examples, either. Thus, Iijima provides no disclosure as to the advantage of that range, which notably is an open-ended range.

Moreover, Iijima relates to a pressure-sensitive adhesive which is moisture permeable, with which skin eruptions or irritation is scarcely caused, and which has an object as well as a design concept different from those of the pressure-sensitive adhesive of the present invention which simultaneously satisfies initial adhesion to already dewy surfaces and constant-load

peeling property from the beginning.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Iijima fails to anticipate the present invention.

The present invention is also distinguishable from Rosenski et al. Since Claim 1 of the present invention is amended to recite that the polyalkylene glycol is incorporated into the composition in the form of an aqueous solution after the polymerization of the acrylic polymer, Applicants' submit that the difference from Rosenski et al. is clear in that Rosenski's addition occurs during polymerization.

Rosenski is characterized by emulsion-polymerizing monomers in the presence of a polyalkylene oxide plasticizer, while in the present invention, polyalkylene glycol is incorporated after polymerization.

More specifically, in Example 4 (column 8), Rosenski describes that "in the case where PEG with a molecular weight of 8,000 is added to an emulsion after polymerization, adhesive property is not imparted by the post addition of PEG". In other words, Rosenski actually teaches away from the present invention as Example 4's addition of polyalkylene oxide after polymerization sets forth an embodiment in which the effect of the invention is not achieved.

In contrast thereto, according to the present invention, the polyalkylene glycol is incorporated in the form of an aqueous solution after the polymerization of an acrylic polymer, in order not to adversely affect the polymerization of an acrylic polymer. Namely, incorporation of the polyalkylene glycol in the form of an aqueous solution after polymerization of the acrylic polymer is a significant key factor for exhibiting the effect of the present invention. Concerning

this aspect, the technique of the present invention and that of Rosenski are entirely different from one another.

Still further, Rosenski relates to "a pressure-sensitive adhesive which is used for paper products, and can be dispersed again in water when the paper product is recycled to give regenerated pulp", and thus Rosenski's object as well as design concept is different from those of the present invention which provides a pressure-sensitive adhesive simultaneously satisfying initial adhesion to dewy surfaces and a constant-load peeling property.

Accordingly, the cited Rosenski et al. reference provides a different formulation for a purpose completely different from that of the present invention.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the foregoing rejections.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No.: 10/616,916

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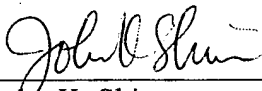
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER



John K. Shin
Registration No. 48,409

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